



**READS THRONE SPEECH**

Governor-General Vanier reads the speech from the throne in the Senate Chamber at the opening of the third session of the 26th Parliament in Ottawa Monday. (CP Wirephoto)

**Finland Continues To Hold Independence, Democracy**

HELSINKI (AP)—Tall, slim Urho Kekkonen presides in watchful calm over this isolated little country of 4,300,000 population whose life on the border of the Soviet Union must be the envy of all East Europe. Finland's frontier with the Soviet Union is the longest in Europe. It runs 700 miles north to south, much of it fenced. The Finns put up the fence to keep their reindeer home.

Finland has maintained its democracy and its independence. Also it is neutral, with a single reservation that it is committed to fight any other country seeking to attack Russia by way of Finnish territory.

President Kekkonen inherited the policy from his predecessor, Juho Paasikivi. Kekkonen is the embodiment of the policy that Finns have accepted, of getting on with the Soviet Union with the minimum of friction, while at the same time preserving largely the country's economic independence and its Westward outlook on life.

A visitor finds the president prefers "conversations" to interviews with direct quotations.

**FACES CRITICISM**

He is sometimes criticized on the grounds that he sees things the Russian way too often. But it would be hard to say he hasn't opposed the Russians. He first began fighting them as a boy of 17 when he sided with the "Whites" to drive Russians and Finnish Communists out of Finland at the time of the Civil War in 1917-18. That struggle left many sore-spots still hurting.

Kekkonen was in government service during the "winter war" launched by the Russians in 1939, and in what the Finns call the "continuing war" when they sided with the Germans to recover some of the land lost during the first operation. They lost again, and had to pay a massive indemnity of \$300,000,000 at pre-war prices.

That forced the country into an industrialization program that changed its way of life, for the Russians demanded machinery, ships and industrial products.

When you start to discuss Russians with Kekkonen he simply says "they are there" and Finland must live, knowing that. In the presence of Nikita Khrushchev, back in 1960, Kekkonen said that even if all other countries turned Communist, Finland would not.

**DENONCES FACT**

While the presence of Russia is a fact of life, so also is the presence of Germany. In this

**TORONTO HOSTS AWARDS**

OTTAWA (CP)—The 17th annual Canadian film awards will be presented in Toronto May 15; it was announced Wednesday. Awards will be made in 15 categories and there will be special recognition of the Film of the Year.

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clear pact as a danger to North European peace. The Finnish opposition pressed this as a departure from a neutral position. But Kekkonen said "we are entitled in our national interest to voice our negative attitude to measures which can disturb the foundations of the policy of peace in northern Europe."



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**Gas Masks Supplied**

SAIGON (AP)—The Viet Cong has started supplying its troops with gas masks.

A dozen of the masks were found hidden in a Communist regimental headquarters overrun by South Vietnamese troops in a cane field region about 15 miles west of Saigon.

U.S. authorities disclosed two weeks ago that non-lethal gas is being used "in certain tactical situations" in Viet Nam.

The Viet Cong gas masks are made from large plastic bags commercially available in Vietnamese cities.

A piece the size of a small envelope is cut from each. This hole was lined with several layers of gauze bandages. Crumbled charcoal is inserted in the bandages.

"It would have the same effect as a charcoal filter in a cigarette," one U.S. adviser commented.

The gas mask presumably is pulled over the head and tied at the neck when a gas attack comes. A Vietnamese soldier experimented by placing one on his head while his comrades blew smoke in his face. He said he could not smell the smoke.

**White Jury Convicts Negro**

MACON, Ga. (AP)—A white jury has convicted a 19-year-old Georgia-Negro of murder in the slaying of his white employer

four years ago. The jury recommended mercy. The Negro, Preston Cobb Jr., was sentenced to life imprisonment and would be eligible for parole consideration after seven years. His lawyers filed notice of appeal.

Cobb, who has been in jail since he was 15, was convicted

of murder and sentenced to die for the death of Frank C. Dumas, 70. Cobb spent 3½ years on death row. He was saved four times from execution by legal action. The second trial was moved here after his lawyers claimed he could not receive a fair hearing in Jasper.

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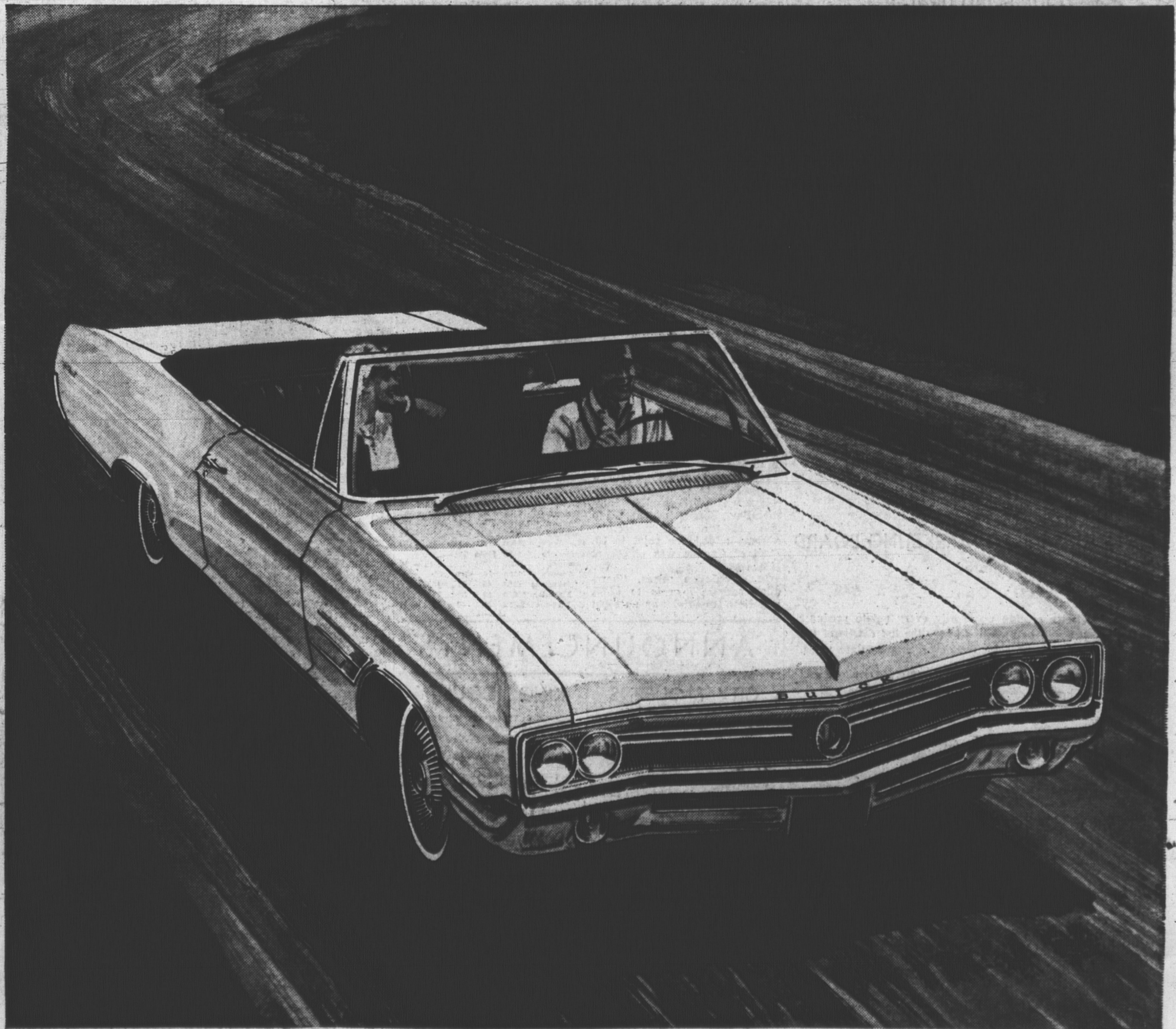
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